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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fox Found near Fat Man's Loop Tests Positive for Rabies

The Coconino County Health Department (CCHD) received a report of a fox exhibiting strange behavior on a trail between Fat Man's Loop and Bible Camp Trail on the eastern side of Mt. Elden in Flagstaff. CCHD Animal Management staff located a dead fox in the area. The fox tested positive for rabies at the Arizona Department of Health Services State Laboratory. There are no known human exposures.

In November 2008, a skunk found in the Continental area and a fox located in the Mt. Elden Lookout Road area tested positive for rabies. Caution is advised on all hiking trails.

Rabies is an infectious disease that affects the nervous system, including the brain and spinal cord of animals and humans. It is caused by a virus present in the saliva of infected animals and is transmitted to humans through contact with the live virus.

Health officials are reminding hikers to use caution throughout the Mt. Elden area and to always avoid any wild animal, particularly one that appears to be sick, is dead, or is behaving in a strange manner.

The following precautions will help to reduce risk of exposure to rabies:

- Avoid any wild animals. People who feed or handle wild animals, and pets coming into contact with wild animals, risk possible exposure to rabies.
- Report any unusual behavior. If you notice animals behaving in a strange manner, contact the CCHD Animal Management office at 928-679-8756. After normal business hours and on weekends, contact the Coconino County Sheriff's Office at 928-774-4523.

- **If hiking with a dog, keep it on a leash no more than six feet in length. Do not let your dog wander freely on the trails as it could come into contact with a wild animal, increasing its risk of exposure to rabies.**

- Have your pet vaccinated against rabies. Arizona State law requires all dogs to be properly vaccinated and licensed. It is also strongly recommended that cats be vaccinated against rabies. Vaccinations are available at local veterinarians or at periodically scheduled CCHD Rabies Vaccination Clinics

The CCHD Animal Management office conducts an active program to monitor for rabies. Bats that have been found dead are routinely tested, as are many other wild animals, in order to monitor rabies in those populations. Pets, including dogs and cats, that come into contact with wild animals may be quarantined until it can be determined if they are adequately vaccinated or were not exposed to rabies.

For more information, call Coconino County Health Department Animal Management at (928) 679-8756.

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